



# Maricopa County

## News Release

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## **SUPERVISORS LISTEN TO FLU VACCINE OPTIONS**

### **Public Health Director Presents Three Alternatives**

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors was presented with three different options today to deal with the public's request for flu vaccine.

Dr. Jonathan Weisbuch, Maricopa County Public Health Director, told the Supervisors that at this time an influenza crisis does not exist in Maricopa County.

In his presentation to the board, Dr. Weisbuch explained that the County had distributed about 4,700 flu vaccines as part of a countywide lottery held several weeks ago. He added that about 1,900 vaccines remained from the original lottery and efforts are being made to provide those to people who might have missed one of the three clinics held to vaccinate people against the flu.

Dr. Weisbuch added that about another 22,000 people who filled out forms have not received the flu vaccine.

Dr. Weisbuch presented the Board with three options to deal with the remaining people.

- Allow the private primary care providers to operate normally and allow them to purchase vaccine and distribute to patients.
- Purchase 22,000 doses when available. These doses could be shipped in December or January. These vaccines would only be used for the residents who wrote to the County in November.
- Maricopa County would not purchase 22,000 doses, but encourage all primary care providers to order enough vaccine to meet expected needs of their patients.

Dr. Weisbuch explained that the cost of the 22,000 doses could be about \$180-thousand. Additional costs would also be incurred to hire extra nurses to man the clinics. He added that Maricopa County has traditionally not been involved in flu vaccinations but assumed a greater role this year due to the vaccine shortage. He explained that the first 6-thousand flu vaccines were free to the County. Any additional vaccine will have to be paid for. That cost may be passed on to people receiving the vaccine.

The Supervisors will decide on an option at their December 1<sup>st</sup> meeting.

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